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ABSTRACT

Focusing on specific issues related to the media and minorities in the United States, this report presents essays on newspapers' impact on minority populations. The four articles discuss the following: (1) the occasional success of Black newspapers (Malcolm F. Mallette); (2) efforts by majority newspapers to cover Hispanic news (Reid Mac Cluggage); (3) a survey indicating five Hispanic culture-based perceptions of the Anglo press that majority newspapers need to overcome (Carl Batt and Christine Urban); and (4) a referral service--Job Net--to help minorities find newspaper job opportunities (Greg Lewis). (HTH)

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MINORITIES

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY NOVEMBER, 1983

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The Minorities Committee

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Black Newspapers

Advertising, circulation goals difficult, but some success stories can be found

BY MALCOLM F. MALLETTE
American Press Institute

A black journalist recalls a childhood when her father would eagerly await the weekly black newspaper. Only in that newspaper, she says, could he learn what was happening to blacks across the country. Today the father finds much of the same news of blacks in his metropolitan newspaper.

Until the 1960s, minority employment by the "white press"—the majority press—was negligible. Now minority employment in majority press newsrooms has reached 5.6 percent, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors has hired a minority affairs director to help achieve by the year 2000 minority employment proportionate to minorities in the U.S. population (some 12 percent blacks, 17 percent for all minorities). Though they have lagged in minority recruitment, most newspapers have at least realized that it is not only morally correct but also good business to hire minorities and thus make news coverage more relevant to all segments of the population.

With the majority press (not all agree this is the appropriate term) scrambling to atone for failures in covering minorities, one might conclude that the black press, withering since its full bloom during World War II, will soon be dead on the vine. But here and there buds are forming for what may be new blossoms to come.

Obstacles are many. The black press has always been short on advertising because advertisers perceive a lack of purchasing power by its readers. Editorial talent is scarce. Recruitment is hampered by low salaries and a reputation that causes talented black journalists to snun even the rare good salaries in favor of the majority press. One black journalist says that the quality of editing on black newspapers is generally so poor that a resume item showing experience on most black newspapers could impede career advancement.

Reliable statistics on the black press are scarce. *Editor & Publisher's 1983 Yearbook* lists 192 black newspapers, some local editions published in several cities. Estimates on the number of black newspapers range as high as 250, but only 130 belong to the black newspaper organization founded in 1940, the National Newspaper Publishers Association. NNPA's executive director, Steve Davis, says there is no way of knowing the number of black newspapers or their total circulation. All black newspapers are weeklies except the five-day *Chicago Defender*, which dates to 1905 and converted from a weekly in 1956.

A 1980 report on black newspaper readership prepared by Scarborough Research Corp. for Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., a national advertising sales organization of the black press, showed a weekly circulation of 1,408,536 for the 88 newspapers it represents. So overall black newspaper circulation in the U.S. might be estimated at about 2.5 million.

The decline of black newspapers is illustrated by the Baltimore-based Afro-American Newspapers, founded in 1892, which publishes newspapers for Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and also a national edition. Afro-American circulation, which averaged 190,000 in the 1940s, now stands at 70,000. In similar fashion, *The Pittsburgh Courier* has plummeted from a 1940s high of 350,000 for its editions published in several cities to below 25,000.

Among the factors in the decline of black newspapers have been the achievement of desegregation, distribution problems resulting from the scattering of black households, poor management by later generations of the founding families, failure to convince advertisers of the growing purchasing power of blacks, broadened coverage of blacks by the majority press, and the passing of great, crusading editors.

The more successful black newspapers have transformed news content, traditionally top-heavy with crime news, and now concentrate on issues such as jobs, housing, education, family, health and transportation, the kinds of issues central to majority press content, but from a black perspective. They are aiming up-scale, targeting the growing black middle class.

Frequently cited as the paradigm for the black newspaper of the future are the Sacramento-based Observer newspapers, the first founded in 1962 by real-estate broker William H. Lee, now publisher. His total circulation in Sacramento, Stockton and the Bay Area is 96,000. Notably, 30 percent of subscribers are non-black. With more inner cities becoming populated primarily by blacks, Lee sees newspapers like his as the "urban communication print vehicles" of the future. Unlike many other black newspapers, the Observers count heavily on research and promotion.

One reason black newspapers have lacked advertising, says Lee, has been their failure to demonstrate the tremendous markets they serve. The 27 million blacks in the U.S. spend approximately $150 billion annually. But the Amalgamated publishers study shows that the top 20 percent of the black population accounts for 45 percent of total black income. Twenty-five percent are above $25,000 in household income and 57 percent of household incomes are above $15,000.

Thus it can be seen why more black newspapers are trying to go up-scale. Still, even successful publishers like Sacramento's Lee concede that "advertising, or the lack thereof, continues to be the primary predicatment of black newspapers." His own advertising volume, Lee says, is "a long way from where it should be."

"By and large, we receive the token ad," says John H. Sengstacke, 71, the lean, intense chairman of the *Chicago Defender*. Sengstacke founded the National Newspaper Publishers Association in 1940 and has been its president five times. He also founded Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. in 1961 and has served as president.

Sengstacke asserts that most companies don't have decision-makers who understand the black community and the exceptional credibility of the black press. Thus the paucity of advertising. "Sears gave us an insert with tractor ads and then complained that the ads didn't pull," says Sengstacke. "Not many Chicago blacks need a farm tractor." If an advertiser puts an ad in the *Defender*, he says,

Continued

blacks know they are welcome in that establishment; not all advertisers truly want black clients.

"The conventional retailer does not allocate advertising budget for black publications," says the advertising director of a major metropolitan newspaper. Black newspapers are hit particularly hard in a recession, says Leo Bogart, executive vice president of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, because the black press advertisement is usually an additional buy made only in prosperous times.

And yet there is hope for increased advertising linage. "Many national advertisers have finally recognized the influence of black newspapers on the local level, says S. Robert Jackson, vice president of Amalgamated Publishing, Inc. In the past two years, says Jackson, national advertising linage sold by Amalgamated has risen 31 percent. Jackson estimates that black newspapers average 12 percent of ad revenue from national advertising.

The Scarborough Research report for black newspapers seeks to convince advertisers that black newspapers engender product loyalty. Says the report, "80 percent feel that the API newspapers speak of their special interests as compared to fewer than six out of 10 adults who feel similarly about the (majority) dailies."

Black newspapers have priced aggressively for national advertising, says Amalgamated's Jackson. Some publishers have wanted to raise rates more than 15 percent, but Jackson has counseled them not to. "It's not easy to raise advertising rates when circulation is not increasing," says John H. Murphy, president of Afro-American Newspapers. "Advertisers think of cost per thousand, but that's an unfair measuring stick for the black specialized market."

Few black newspapers offer advertisers the desired household penetration. Desegregation, achieved partly through the dedicated work of black newspapers, now works against them as many blacks move to scattered households. "It comes down to money," says Chicago's Sengstacke. "We can't set up the district offices we need. It's hard to mount home delivery because blacks are scattered. The *Defender* operates 15 trucks; to reach scattered black readers we should have 25-30 trucks."

"You get circulation where you can," says Baltimore's John Murphy. "We concentrate on areas where middle-class blacks live because they have more purchasing power—thus advertising. It's difficult to set up home delivery, so we push mail subscriptions."

Murphy recalls how circulation worked when blacks lived in more confined areas. "Years ago, in D.C. on the corner of 7th and Florida a newsboy could sell 300 black newspapers on a Thursday night. Or 14th and U. Now he couldn't sell five papers there. Besides some junkie would hassle him. The day of the newsboy is gone." The Afro-American newspapers sell 10 percent mail subscriptions, the rest mostly at newsstands.

As black newspapers revamp content and raise writing and editing standards, there are signs that the future may see one or more national black newspapers that will be sold in some cities in conjunction with a local black newspaper.

A black national newspaper that already is having a major impact is the Philadelphia-based *National Leader*, whose editor and publisher is Claude Lewis, formerly an associate editor and columnist with the defunct *Philadelphia Bulletin*. The tabloid *National Leader*, first published in May 1982, has attained a circulation of more than 100,000. Lewis hopes his fledgling paper will be profitable by 1984.

His objectives for the *Leader* are to set a standard of excellence for black newspapers and develop national coverage of the black community that the majority press has never offered.

The tabloid *Leader*, with a news staff of 15 and stringers nationwide, averages 32 pages. Lewis has spoken of going daily in five years. In September he told of plans to establish a sales network with local black newspapers whereby the *National Leader* would be tucked into the hometown paper. The combination would give readers both national and local black news.

With few exceptions, says Lewis, black newspapers have made the mistake of writing down to the black community. "The black community is progressing, but a large number of black newspapers are offering the same news and analysis they did 20 years ago. We've got to go up-scale. Black newspapers will have to produce a better product or go out of business."

But editorial talent is a terrible problem, and when two black editors speak of improving content they could be speaking of two quite different quality levels. On the quality of the *National Lead-*

er staff, Lewis says, "It's better than I expected but not as good as I had hoped. We've been turned down by some good help. We're suffering from the reputation of black newspapers that we (at the *National Leader*) have not earned. Good black journalists too often think of black newspapers as inferior. The perception is fairly accurate, but we're beginning to change the perception of some blacks on white papers. They're asking for chances to free-lance pieces for us. They seek entree to the black press, though they're not necessarily asking for jobs with us just yet."

If a prestigious black newspaper the size of the *National Leader* has difficulty getting the talent it desires, it's not surprising that the personnel plight of smaller black newspapers is far more difficult. A case in point is *The Carolina Times* in Durham, N.C. *The Carolina Times*, in its 62nd year, has a circulation of 8,300. Durham has an unusually large black middle class. The newspaper, says executive editor Milton Jordan, is trying to reposition itself for greater readership. The opportunity is there, says Jordan, for blacks now face issues not even conceived of in the early days of the black press. Recently, the *Times* has produced a special section on young professionals and a series on politics 1984. Jordan thinks his newspaper can generate coverage of interest to blacks and whites alike.

But staff is a problem. Not long ago, Jordan had a full-time staff of three. They proved too young and unequal to the quality Jordan seeks. Now he works with a latticework of freelancers committed to different production levels, from three to 20 or more stories a month. Anyone reaching the top lattice will be considered for full-time staff.

On talent, one knowledgeable observer, a black, sees two forces at work. First, some black students feel committed to the black community and work for black newspapers as a political act. But, second, most black newspapers have small staffs that receive low pay. In particular, there is a copy editor shortage. Much of the news is a rewrite of press releases. This means that the best black journalism graduates either forego black newspapers or move on quickly, as the majority press intensifies its search for minority journalists.

Despite all these problems, success stories can be found. In 1974, Ernest H. Pitt founded the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* in North Carolina. In February 1983, the *Chronicle*, circulation 5,000, won first place for general excellence among weeklies in the state. It was the first time a black newspaper had won this award. Pitt, now 37, says he has a simple formula: produce an accurate, interesting, relevant newspaper to build circulation and advertising will inevitably follow.

One innovation of the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* is a monthly sports supplement September through April with heavy coverage of black-college sports. Nine other black weeklies now carry the supplement, which exemplifies the networking that may become commonplace.

Then there is the question whether black newspapers have lost sight of their mission.

"The role of the black press remains the same, says Chicago's Sengstacke. When a black gets into trouble, he turns to the *Defender*, not the *Tribune* or the *Sun-Times*. Black newspapers were started to promote the needs of underprivileged people. Today, some younger publishers think that the underprivileged now have it made. With few exceptions, the blacks do not have it made. What has happened so far is only window dressing. A newspaper must be involved in its community. Some of the young black publishers are not involved."

In 1974, Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, who publishes black newspapers in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and other Bay Area communities, delivered a ringing address as president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. The prophetic mission of the black press, he said, is "to champion the cause of millions of the black masses who hover in the twilight zone of economic destitution. . . We can be the catalytic agent in the national struggle for the development of a society worthy of the American dream."

One person close to the black press wishes to remain anonymous in expressing views whether the commitment of the black press has changed. "The crisis that confronted blacks in the early '40s and before were traumatic, through the '60s," he says.

"The black press had great editors then, and they were fighters for the cause of blacks. The black communities looked to them. They had national entree to power. It was not uncommon for 15 to 20 black publishers to meet with FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt) or his cabinet. Men like Carl Murphy in Baltimore or Robert L. Vann in Pittsburgh or Frank Staley in Louisville. Their heirs have taken over, and I don't wish to impugn them, but they don't have the determination. The black community is not looking to black editors as in the past."

Raymond H. Boone, lecturer in journalism at Howard University, the predominantly black institution in Washington, D.C., agrees. Boone spent 16 years with the Afro-American group and for a while was group vice president and editor. "I'm terribly disturbed," he says. "Black newspapers are becoming more involved in promotion than in serving readers. The revival of the black press will be directly related to its recommitment to its mission of crusading against racial, economic and social inequities." Boone concedes that black newspapers lack resources, but he says that if he were a publisher today, readers and advertisers would turn to his paper for its credibility on social wrongs.

The debate over commitment is understandable when one considers that the issues—and the odds—faced by the black press trace back as far as the Reconstruction. When Robert Sengstacke Abbott started the *Chicago Defender* on a shoestring in 1905 he laid out a nine-point program of needed progress for blacks.

Only two have been achieved, says descendant Sengstacke: a black in the federal Cabinet and federal laws against lynching.

In Philadelphia, Claude Lewis takes a middle stance on the commitment issue. "Only in isolated instances, he says, have black editors lost the fierce commitment of the past. In some cases, current editors simply do not know how to convey information to blacks. Blacks are too often viewed as problems rather than people."

There Lewis touches the reason black editors think their newspapers will stay in business, even though the majority press is increasing coverage of blacks. "They (the majority press)," says Lewis, "cannot offer analysis from a black perspective. The black press does not pretend to be objective—but then the white press is not objective either." Lewis foresees fewer black needs and concerns.

Some metropolitan newspapers cover blacks a little better than in the past, says Sengstacke, "but not to the extent of being born, married and dying. There will be a role for the black press until every vestige of discrimination is eliminated. I doubt I will see that in my time."

One of the most confident voices is that of William Lee of Sacramento, who thinks black newspapers are becoming more sensitive to reader concerns and more professional in their operation. Declares Lee: "We are here to stay."

Hispanic Press

Editors discuss how they publish news for our fastest-growing minority group

BY REID MacCLUGGAGE
The Hartford Courant

Increasingly, editors in the nation's most heavily Hispanic cities are struggling with how to cover the Latino community and how to find new readers among the fastest-growing ethnic group in America.

An Associated Press story in July quoted a private population-study group as saying that, barring new checks on immigration, Hispanics likely will surpass blacks to become the nation's largest minority by the year 2020. They already are the largest minority in many cities, and in some cases make up more than half of the population.

The APME Minorities Committee looked at 10 cities with the greatest number of Hispanics and found that editors differ in their approach to how the Latino community should be covered.

In Los Angeles, both the *Times* and the *Herald-Examiner* have used the local Spanish-language press to reach the nation's largest Hispanic population. In Miami, *The Herald* publishes a daily Spanish-language supplement, but in Chicago a similar experiment failed at the *Sun-Times*. And in cities such as San Antonio, Houston and El Paso, some editors have created Hispanic beats or columns but stop short of Spanish-language pages or sections.

"The Hispanics would resent it," one editor said. "They would see it as playing down to them." Another said, "We think special pages or sections are wrong. It is almost a form of discrimination."

Using the 1980 census, the Minorities Committee selected these areas high in Hispanic population: Los Angeles, New York City, Miami, Chicago, San Antonio, Houston, San Francisco-Oakland, El Paso, Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario and Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove. Of the 14.6 million Hispanics who live in the U.S., 6.8 million live in these 10 population areas.

Christine D. Urban, who heads her own market research and consulting firm in Massachusetts, says there are two basic problems facing editors who are looking for ways to cover the Hispanic community.

"First, there are many different kinds of Hispanics and there are big barriers between Hispanic groups," Urban says. "Cuban coverage is very different from Puerto Rican coverage. Plus there is a strong resistence in the Hispanic community toward lumping together the different Hispanic groups. Hispanics are not a homogenous subgroup.

"Second," she says, "there is a strong perception on the part of editors that Hispanic coverage means just datelines from Buenos Aires or Mexico City.

"News for Hispanics," she says, "doesn't have to come from Latin America. The dateline does not make it Hispanic news."

What does make it Hispanic news, says Urban, are topical areas of importance such as the economy, unemployment, family, home, health and medicine. A more colorful graphic design also would help to attract Hispanic readers, she says, and a good classified advertising section.

Many Hispanics in the U.S. tend to be lower middle class economically, so they are intensely interested in subjects such as unemployment, jobs and the economy, she says. The culture places family and home among the most important values, she says, so those, along with health and medicine, should be winning subjects with Hispanic readers. Urban also believes that classified advertising is popular among Hispanics because "it is the preferred way of shopping—dealing with other people."

Hispanics share "a different world view of how society works" from the one embraced by the "white males in their 40s and 50s who run America's newsrooms," she says. They "see the world in a different way" and editors must understand what that means before newspapers can fulfill the needs of Hispanic readers.

"Overall, there is a lot of ignorance of the Hispanic community," says Frank Sotomayor, a Hispanic, and an assistant metropolitan editor at the *Los Angeles Times*. "There is a failure to understand the community on the part of most newspapers. A lot of people hold stereotypes."

Sotomayor says there should be more Latinos in American newsrooms "to put developments and events in better perspective. Many white reporters are not able to develop good stories in the barrios because they don't understand the communities and they don't speak the language.

Carl Batt, an anthropologist who works with Urban as market research manager, says Hispanics dislike the style of American newspapers. U.S. newspapers are "not colorful enough, not personal enough," he says. "The third person objective is a cold, American approach. They see Americans as Mr. Spock."

But Batt says that Hispanics possess a strong need for news, "a strong need to appear knowledgeable, a desire for independence, respect and dignity." He says they are concerned about their image with others. They can't appear to be inadequate in any way in public. Newspapers could capitalize on this need to know what's going on."

The *Miami Herald* is one newspaper that has. The daily *El Herald* is unquestionably the best-known experiment in Spanish-language coverage wrapped in a traditional newspaper.

It all began in the early 1970s when the *Herald* concluded that Dade County's large Cuban community wasn't being covered well, and that the newspaper was missing readership opportunities. The Hispanic community was growing but 70 percent of the *Herald's* penetration was in the English-speaking neighborhoods.

El Herald, a separate zoned section of each day's regular *Herald*, was started in 1975 and its circulation today reaches 60,000. Staffed with 25 Hispanic journalists, *El Herald* covers the top local, national and international stories of the day.

Heath J Meriwether, Herald executive editor, foresees even more localized Hispanic coverage. "The goal is to capture more of the Hispanic readers. Fifty percent of the 800,000 Latinos in Dade

County on any given day don't read any newspaper," Meriwether says. "There is no newspaper tradition and we have to look at ways to reach them with even more local coverage because penetration has dropped with the increasing Latinization of Dade County."

A decade ago, when *El Herald* was being planned, most editors thought it would be a temporary publication, serving the immediate needs of a growing Hispanic population and then folding as Latinos became assimilated. But that is not happening and Meriwether sees *El Herald* surviving at least through the 1980s.

"Hispanics are not assimilating easily," says Batt, the anthropologist. "They are the most resistent of any group to shedding their language."

Sue Reisinger, managing editor of the *Miami News*, the *Herald's* chief rival, says her paper had a Hispanic page, written in Spanish, but dropped it when *El Herald* debuted "because we couldn't compete."

She believes a Spanish-language edition is a bad idea. "It could alienate our Anglo readers, although that's not the primary reason. Our readership studies show that if we published a Spanish-language edition we would be putting out a section for a declining population, as they become Americanized. This has been slowed somewhat by a fresh influx of Hispanics," she said, "but eventually they will be assimilated."

The *News* reaches Hispanic readers by concentrating on sports and entertainment, Reisinger says. In addition, a Hispanic reporter covers the Latino community and Cox bureaus in Mexico and Argentina supply coverage of Central and South America. Still, says Reisinger, "it is difficult to find Hispanic readers. Readership studies show that Hispanics listen to the radio and watch TV. American journalism doesn't particularly interest them."

In Chicago, the *Sun-Times* tried a Spanish-language weekly for two years but it failed in April.

The weekly, *Las Vecinos*, was published on Friday with the regular *Sun-Times* and it was zoned to reach the Puerto Rican, Mexican and Cuban communities. The staff included four full-time reporters and editors and some freelance translators. In the end, it died because advertisers weren't satisfied, says Managing Editor Gregory E. Favre, "and classified never came along, either."

Favre says the big advertisers, such as Sears and J.C. Penney, discovered they could reach the same Hispanic reader with an ad in the regular *Sun-Times*.

There was little reader reaction when *Las Vecinos* folded but when it was started there was plenty, all from other ethnic groups who wanted the *Sun-Times* to publish a newspaper for them, too.

When *Las Vecinos* folded the four staffers moved to the Neighbors section where they now are covering local news in English, much of it, Favre says, of interest to the Hispanic community.

At the rival *Tribune*, Managing Editor Richard Ciccone says his paper doesn't do as well as it should covering Hispanics but "we've begun a city zone insert in which we're doing a lot more with inner city news, including more Latino news."

As for the Hispanic reader, Ciccone says, "I have a feeling that the Latino is reading the newspaper the way most other people do. He wants to know about what George Shultz is doing and what's happening in the nation and the rest of the city."

In Los Angeles, where there are more than two million Hispanics, the *Times* and the *Herald-Examiner* are working on joint publication of major Hispanic stories with *La Opinion*, a Spanish-language newspaper.

The simultaneous publication in another newspaper serving a different readership "is a new way to reach the community," says Mary Anne Dolan, editor of the *Herald-Examiner*. "It speaks to the real situation without regard to circulation increases. It is also a tool of education." Dolan says that Hispanic immigrants are eager to learn English and simultaneous publication in both languages serves that purpose.

At the *Times*, says Managing Editor George Cotliar, there is no continual coverage of any ethnic community. "What we do is keep going back, taking a deep look at all groups," he says. The *Times* published a special 16-story report this summer on the life and hard times of Latinos in Southern California. "Last year" he says, "we published a special report on blacks. Our approach may not be the answer but we have so damn many ethnic communities. We may need to find some middle ground."

Cotliar says the special Latino report, conceived and written by Hispanic reporters and editors at the *Times*, took more than a half-year to complete. It ran in Spanish in *La Opinion*.

There have been "mixed responses in surveys on whether Hispanic readers prefer stories written in Spanish or English," Cotliar says. "It's not clear but I think more want English. We have considered special Spanish sections tailored to the Latino community but have decided not to. It would be a costly venture."

Dolan says *La Opinion* has published two *Herald-Examiner* projects in Spanish, one on the garment industry called "Sweatshops" and the other a multipart series on Central America. Each newspaper published a front-page box explaining that the stories could be read in English in the *Herald-Examiner* and Spanish in *La Opinion*. In addition, a Spanish radio station read the stories over the air.

Many editors in areas of high Hispanic population believe strongly that no special attention should be paid to Hispanics as an ethnic group.

"Ethnically, we don't address ourselves to any market," says Seymour Topping, managing editor of the *New York Times*. "We don't think in those terms. We think in terms of news coverage."

Robert C. Maynard, the editor of the *Oakland Tribune*, says, "We cover the total community. We simply cover the news."

"We'll treat them (Hispanics) like anybody else because they want to be treated like anybody else," says Charles Kilpatrick, editor of the *San Antonio Express News*.

Other editors, though, have experimented with coverage. There have been some successes and some failures. Here are a few:

Jim Duncan, editor of the *Anaheim Bulletin*, says he tried a Spanish column several years ago "but it was so godawful that we got more derision from the Hispanic community than compliments, so we dropped it."

The *San Antonio Light* has assigned writers to produce neighborhood columns about the Hispanic community. They are popular, says Managing Editor Ed Rademaekers, but "we've got to go after the higher economic profile people, not so much the barrio."

Wayne Sargent, editor of *The Sun* in San Bernardino, Calif., says that his paper opened a two-person bureau in the barrio a few years ago "to show the Hispanic and black communities that we wanted to cover them. It was semi-cosmetic." It was also only 10 blocks from the main office and that's where the two-person bureau was most often found. So *The Sun* closed the bureau.

Kuyk Logan, managing editor of the *Houston Post*, says his paper assigns a Hispanic writer to file a column on Latin American affairs.

Kilpatrick says the *San Antonio Express News*

Continued

tried a news summary in Spanish but found that the only readers were elementary school language teachers.

No matter how newspapers cover Hispanic issues or Latin America, says anthropologist Batt, "there is a perceived bias on the part of the Hispanic community. You may be using what you think is straightforward, but we have an Anglo view of things.

"Editors," he says, "have to have sensitivity. Most news subtely puts Hispanics down. The kinds of events that are covered are negative and it's a hard thing for Hispanics to swallow. Look at the coverage of the Falklands war. There is enough actual bias to give a sense of reality to that paranoia."

Urban says that "editors wrestling with coverage of the Hispanic community should go out for a review. Put together a panel of people as an advisory board. Study the market, maybe do some deep research. There are hundreds of marvelous books that are real good reading.

"And," she says, "the desegregation of the newsroom has to take place."

The cities studied

Here are the areas studied by the Minorities Committee:

Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area	Persons of Spanish Origin
1. Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif.	2,066,103
2. New York, N.Y.	1,493,148
3. Miami, Fla.	580,994
4. Chicago, Ill.	580,609
5. San Antonio, Texas	481,511
6. Houston, Texas	424,903
7. San Francisco-Oakland, Calif.	351,698
8. El Paso, Texas	297,001
9. Riverside-San Bernardino -Ontario, Calif.	290,280
10. Anaheim-Santa Ana -Garden Grove, Calif.	286,339

A recommended reading list

Here is a list of recommended reading for the editor who wants to learn more about Hispanic life. When possible there is a brief description of the book or article. In some cases the author is listed by last name only.

Tonala by May Diaz, a book about Mexican villagers, the kind who might migrate to the U.S.

Tzintzuntzan by George Foster, a good book about Mexican villagers.

Social Character in a Mexican Village by Eric Fromm and Michael Maccoby, a book about the Mexican character as a whole.

Where the Air is Clear by Carlos Fuentes, a book about modern middle-class Mexicans.

Social Change in Latin America Today by Adams, especially the chapter entitled *The Middle Segments and Their Values*, by John Gillin.

Tropical Childhood by Landy, a book about growing up in Puerto Rico.

Love and Authority: A Study of Mexican Villagers by Michael Maccoby (Atlantic Monthly, 1964).

The Mexican American of South Texas by William Madsen.

Up from Puerto Rico by Elena Padilla.

The Image of the United States in 10 Mexican Dailies by Merrill (Journalism Quarterly, winter 1962).

Culture and Social Psychiatry by Marvin Opler, especially the chapter entitled *The Dilemmas of Two Puerto Rican Men.*

The Labyrinth of Solitude by Octavio Paz.

Sons of the Shaking Earth by Eric Wolf.

The People of Aritama by Reichel-Dolmatoff.

La Vida by Oscar Lewis, a book about Puerto Ricans in New York and Puerto Rico.

And these four, all about Mexico, also by Oscar Lewis: *Life in a Mexican Village, Five Families, The Children of Sanchez*, and *Pedro Martinez.*

Especially good are *Social Character in a Mexican Village, Where the Air is Clear, The Dilemmas of Two Puerto Rican Men, The Labyrinth of Solitude, The Mexican in South Texas* and all of the Oscar Lewis books.

Reaching Hispanics

Survey results show how to break barriers between editors, Hispanics

BY CARL BATT AND
CHRISTINE URBAN

Building circulation and readership among the growing number of Hispanic adults in many markets has proven to be a difficult task for many newspapers. Despite special efforts (e.g.: Hispanic columns, sections, or intensified Latin American coverage), most papers have met with limited success.

Faced with this dilemma, some editors fall back on the tried-and-true "reasons" why Hispanics don't read their newspaper:

1) "They don't read English anyway."

2) "Even if they did, they don't/can't pay for the paper."

3) "We must be missing something that they want in the paper."

Admittedly, the first two are knotty problems—since basic literacy in English and economic ability-to-pay are prerequisites for newspaper readership in all adults, Hispanic or Anglo. There is also no evidence in research conducted by Urban & Associates to suggest that Hispanics prefer to read newspaper articles in Spanish, even if it is the spoken language in the home.

Many editors, following "reason" No. 3, have sought in vain for the missing link: trying improved Latin American coverage, more stories about the Hispanic community, more pictures of Hispanic leaders, more Spanish-surnamed bylines, etc. When these half- or full-hearted attempts fail, some give up with a sigh—concluding "Those people just aren't interested in what's going on."

Nothing could be further from the truth.

THE NEWS NEED OF HISPANIC ADULTS

Urban & Associates has conducted market research and reader studies in a number of markets with significant Hispanic populations, and one of the strongest conclusions of each of these studies is that Hispanics are quite interested in what's going on, and have intense news need. In fact, the scope and type of hard news on which they place their highest priorities—national and international news, news of their city and area, pro and amateur sports, etc.—are no different than those found among Anglo readers.

Through the long list of news interests and priorities, Hispanic and Anglo readers show few substantial differences in the ranking or intensity of their interest in hard, spot news. (There are some differences, of course. Hispanic readers are more interested in articles about personal and family health, home economics and medicine, as well as being more-intense readers of classified and retail advertising than are most Anglos.

But these content areas—however well covered—are not enough to build or maintain Hispanic readership of the newspaper. They are supplementary and definitely lower in importance to Hispanics than is the basic spot-news reporting that is the value and the definition of a newspaper.)

In short, there are no "magic" content areas that will turn the Hispanic's lower readership and purchase of the newspaper around. For the important characteristics that stimulate newspaper readership (e.g.: the "need to know," the habit of reading/hearing news on a daily basis, etc.), Hispanics are no different than Anglos. In fact, it could be argued that Hispanics have a more deeply rooted "need to know" than most American Anglos. The Hispanic culture places a great emphasis on verbal eloquence and the ability to display knowledge of "what's going on." (In general, the Hispanic culture has little admiration for the strong silent type, or for the art of understatement.)

This cultural trait explains, in large part, why Hispanics are much more likely than Anglos to agree strongly with attitude statements such as "I get embarrassed if, in a conversation, I can't think of something interesting to say" and "I have to read or listen to the news in the morning before I start my day."

Since being well-informed and expressing strongly stated opinions are important parts of the culture, it's not surprising that Hispanics need a continuing source of information. Right now, research clearly indicates that the leading providers for the Hispanic community are radio and television. Also, their readership of particular magazines (such as *People*) is exceptionally high. Hispanic adults are not avoiding news, but seeking it. They don't have an underdeveloped news need, but a strong and practical one. It would seem that American newspapers should meet these needs quite nicely. What, then, is the impediment? What's wrong with what American newspapers offer?

This article highlights some of the impediments. It is based on market research conducted in a number of markets in the United States, as well as first-hand experience with Hispanic culture and behavior.

In general, we found that the problems have much less to do with the content than with the style of American newspapers.

There are five important areas in which Hispanic readers and Anglo editors are "at odds"; some of which can be remedied, and others of which cannot without significant disruptions in the method and objectives of American journalism.

(One caveat to the reader: the following five points are all well-founded in research and knowledge of the Hispanic population, but they are generalizations. The reader is asked to forgive an irony in the article: we refer to "Hispanics," even though the point is made that that term is a dangerous one, and we make generalizations about Hispanics, even though we say one should be cautious in doing so. An editor with significant percentages of Hispanics in his/her marketplace should use this article, then, as a starting point for thought and understanding—not as a substitute for specific knowledge of the individual differences in the market he or she serves.)

The biggest barrier to increased Hispanic readership of American newspapers appears to be a matter of style, rather than substance. It isn't a lack of coverage of certain types of news that is

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problematic, but the way that news and feature content is written and played in the newspaper.

There are several fundamental aspects of American journalism that are "at odds" with the Hispanic readers' expectations or values. First, let's discuss the concept of "objectivity."

BARRIER NO. 1: COLD OBJECTIVITY

The American press greatly values objectivity in reporting, and even the writing style of a spot news story is expected to emphasize the "who, what, where and when" facts—and very often, just the facts of the story. This writing style is designed to be unemotional about the event, to be serious in its presentation, and to inculcate a discipline in both reporter and reader.

Hispanic readers, however, often believe that this cold, unemotional presentation of facts trivializes the news and actually obscures the real issues. While the reporter and editor strive to go beyond personalities to the impersonal forces which shape events (i.e.: the "cause-and-effect" tracking of a story's background), Hispanics recognize that the personalities involved might be their true causes. The newspaper reporters and editors who don't recognize this are often seen as either naive or biased.

As has been intimated, much of the conflict in Hispanic readers' and Anglo editors' expectations of the newspaper is rooted in fundamental differences between the two cultures, not in some specific deficiency on the part of journalists. Anglo culture (which is assumed for the majority of editors) reveres rationality, logic and fairness in the reporting and interpretation of events; Hispanic culture values drama, story-telling and recognition of the human foibles of the event-makers. Hispanic readers are often bored by the disciplined objectivity of a string of facts, while Anglo readers would be angry at a disregard of that discipline.

This dichotomy stands out when Anglo vs. Hispanic perceptions of a particular newspaper's quality, objectivity or fairness are measured. American editors fear both the perception and reality of biased reporting, and their Anglo readers share this concern. In fact, one of the strongest indictments seen recently in newspaper research is the growing dissatisfaction among Anglo readers with "editorializing of the news"—i.e., not being accurate or complete about the facts, or objective in their reportage. For Hispanics, this lack of objectivity is a non-problem: they are much more concerned with a newspaper's ability to understand and communicate the real news situation—the event, as well as the comedy, the tragedy, and the simple humanity behind it.

BARRIER NO. 2: LACK OF THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Another aspect of "style" has to do with a more subtle, but important difference between Hispanics and Anglos.

Hispanic individuals tend to think of the world in personal terms. They distrust impersonal "forces" (such as government programs or economic "curves"), and are disinterested in the abstract relationships and theories presumed to be behind news events.

This belief has several implications for how news should be presented for Hispanic readers. First and foremost, it means that Hispanic-oriented news is not as much a matter of geographic datelines or the ethnicity of the newsmakers as it is news written with a view toward the people involved.

The Hispanic reader wants to be able to read about real people involved in real relationships—whether those real people are working men or heads of state. For example, the Hispanic reader is

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not interested in reading about whether or not a particular politician represents the economic or political positions of "the Hispanic community." He or she is much more interested in the politician's personal qualities. Likewise, the Hispanic reader is less interested in the plight of Chicano migrant workers as in the story of a particular migrant's life, the impact on his/her family, and his opinions and perspectives.

It is not necessary for a news story to be about individuals to have a personal perspective. Even in a "straight" government story which reports on the deliberations of a specific issue, some anecdotes or personal insight into the newsmakers involved might be a welcome addition for Hispanic and Anglo readers alike.

BARRIER NO. 3: THE MR. SPOCK SYNDROME

Aficionados of the "Star Trek" TV series will remember Mr. Spock and his consistent tendencies to explain inexplicable behavior with a complex but highly logical process of deduction. Captain Kirk also consistently reminded him that some things happen just because human beings are involved, and for no other reason.

In a way, the difference in Hispanic and Anglo world views is the difference between Kirk and Spock; Hispanic readers consistently sense that their newspaper does not recognize that sometimes chance, luck or simple humanity is at work in the events of the day. They feel their newspaper can be accused of a Spock-like naivete about the "way the word works".

Anglos tend to believe in the ability of the individual to determine his/her own life, to achieve success through hard work, to cooperate with others in a system governed by common goals, and to value efficiency and effectiveness in a system of human relationships.

There is a feeling that the world has some sense of order, and that plans can be made and goals achieved. To individuals raised in a Hispanic culture, the philosophy described briefly above is, at best, naive.

Hispanic cultures have a stronger sense that life is sometimes unfair, even chaotic. Rather than being able to trace cause-and-effect to many events, they suspect that humans and institutions are often capricious, whimsical and even irrational in their behavior.

Seeing no abstract principles or common goals that everyone shares, primary responsibility must be to oneself, one's family, and one's network of close friends.

There is no great "program" or larger "society to which Hispanics feel a strong loyalty--and so they have little faith in explaining events based on the operations of impersonal policies and plans. More often than not, they would argue, the reason a particular government or social policy was adopted was because of the whim or selfish interest of a particular individual. For someone who accepts and is trained in this world view, the American beliefs in self-determination, in the goal of uncorrupted government and in abstract loyalties to a faceless "cause" appear childlike and naive. In a way, their feeling is "Can't they see what's really going on?"

Given this profound difference in world view, it isn't surprising that Hispanics reject the "objectivity" so valued by American editors: they believe that newspapers, like other organizations, are serving narrowly defined personal interests.

In survey after survey, Hispanics may feel that a particular newspaper is "biased in its reporting," but the impact of that belief on their readership or evaluation of the newspaper is not half as negative as it would be among Anglo readers.

Whereas Anglos feel that bias or intentioned inaccuracy in a newspaper is a violation of their confidence, Hispanics accept it as more a normal state of affairs—to be commented upon, but not comdemned.

BARRIER NO. 4: THE PERCEPTION OF ANTI-HISPANIC BIAS

First of all, it's clear that even the best-intentioned coverage of Hispanic news may be perceived by Hispanic readers as unfair or biased.

Much of the spot news from Latin America or local Hispanic communities is, by its nature, negative. Merely reporting the facts about Latin American economies, politics or military maneuvers often places those countries in a bad light. The unfortunate, but unavoidable consequence of this is that Hispanic readers feel "put down," and go on the defensive.

Also, the Anglo viewpoint and sense of cause-and-effect, which is endemic in objective, factual reporting for the American press, contributes to the sense of bias. (In addition to "who, what, where and when"—there's also "why.")

The stories written about Latin America or about Hispanics, then, often violate the Hispanic reader's different understanding of the situation, and so the coverage (and, therefore, the newspaper itself which published the reports) is perceived to be unfair not only in the content of the news report but in its presentation and explanation.

There is another aspect of perceived bias worth noting, and this is one that most newspaper editors can remedy without doing damage to their own definitions of solid reporting.

Hispanics often view publicly made negative statements or criticisms as insulting, unfriendly acts—no matter how carefully the quote is transcribed or the context of it explained. Moreover, Hispanics view American "informality and friendliness" as an invasion of their privacy by strangers, and therefore as an insult.

Because Hispanics guard their own sense of personal dignity quite carefully, they expect others to do the same. They don't appreciate the "good quote" that casts dispersion on other people, nor do they appreciate reporters putting pressure on the family of accident victims, for instance, to "talk about their feelings."

In addition, the personal-advice columns in many newspapers dispense quick solutions to sensitive family or personal problems—problems which Hispanic readers feel are the private domain and prerogative of the family members themselves.

BARRIER NO. 5: STEREOTYPING

Like every other group of people, Hispanics resent stereotyping. Unlike other groups, however, newspapers appear to have found a "shorthand" that lumps together Hispanics of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

This is especially troublesome to Hispanic readers.

Latin America, for instance, is an enormous place which is only vaguely known to most Americans. Most Anglos do not know or appreciate the contrasting nationalities, races, cultures, classes and dialects that exist in the countries described so simply as "Latin America." Being acutely aware of subtle differences between cultures and groups (e.g.: reacting to a particular news event reported in the paper with a comment like "Well, that's typical of the Colombians."), Hispanics react badly to gross generalizations made by Anglos.

If there are sensitivities about lumping together countries and cultures, then, think how much more sensitive Hispanic readers are to stereotyped descriptions of the behavior, background or motivations of their own local group. Local Hi-

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spanic groups stress their own uniqueness and resent labels such as "the Latinos," "the Chicanos," or the ever-popular "Hispanic community."

Hispanics are not easily assimilating into the presumed meltingpot of American culture. There is a very strong sense of the individual and the family group—one constantly reinforced by the "network" both here in America and that retained by staying in close touch with relatives in Latin American countries.

These complex networks are a barrier to assimilation into American society, and it'll be quite awhile before Hispanic readers are willing to forgive the journalistic shorthand accepted by Anglos.

In describing this barrier, we are not at all suggesting that generalizations about Hispanics are unacceptable. Rather, we suggest that, bcause this is a particular sore spot, editors should handle generalizations with care. Some are appropriate (for the situation) or necessary (for the journalistic shorthand), but even under these conditions editors should be aware of the sensitivities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some suggestions to editors are already clear from the explanations of the "barriers" between them and their potential Hispanic readers. To review, these are:

- Recognize that Hispanic readers have the same intensity and the same kinds of need for solid spot-news as do Anglo readers. Don't try to find new content areas for the Hispanic reader, or kid yourself that particular datelines or bylines are going to "do the trick".
- Understand that meeting some of the stylistic desires of a Hispanic audience would do harm to the conflicting desires of your Anglo readers. This isn't an "out" to do nothing—because many of the style changes that would positively impact Hispanic readership would also be attractive to Anglo readers. Obviously, the rule is to use good news judgment as well as an open mind toward change, depending on the specific market.
- Realize that not everyone thinks alike—not everyone sees objectively, fairness, completeness, or even cause-and-effect the same way.
- Don't assume that there is such a thing as a "Hispanic community" in your market unless you know for sure. Even markets with the vast majority of Hispanic adults emanating from the same national background may not be a "community," or speak with one voice.
- Temper serious, factual reporting with some thought to the human dimension of the story. Maybe the events are not as cut-and-dried as they seem, or as they are reported.
- Don't worry about things you cannot change. Accept that many stories, especially international stories, will be seen as biased even if done under the best journalistic standards. (This, of course, is true not only for Hispanics reading news from Latin America, but Poles reading about Poland, Jews reading about Israel, etc.) Accept that, in some cases, your understanding may be different than theirs.
- Change the things that you can. Understand and then act upon the knowledge you have of different cultures: expect a different kind of relationship with Hispanic news sources than you have with Anglo sources; be conscious of the intense family privacy of Hispanic cultures; be careful not to insult the Hispanic readers with sloppy reporting of their community, or inelegant Spanish (if you publish in Spanish).
- Rethink old positions. Even if you've "tried before" to run Hispanic articles, more Latin American news, etc., try again. The reason it didn't succeed before may not be what you did, but how you did it (style vs. content).
- Study your market. Reid MacLuggage's article in this APME Report suggests some books that are not only informative about the Hispanic culture, but good reading as well. When doing market research, be sure to not only cross-tabulate but also really study the responses of Hispanics: how their perceptions of your paper differ from Anglo readers, what kinds of reading intensities and priorities they have, etc. Don't accept generalizations or aphorisms as answers—understand both the differences and the similarities in your market.

Finally, the following suggestion—only for editors in those markets in which the Hispanic population is significant (i.e., 35% or more of adults).

- Consider a separate publication for Hispanics. Despite the history that cries "it's been tried here" or "it didn't work over there," the option is one to rethink.

Don't consider only traditional newspapers—think about shoppers or weeklies written in a brighter/more-personal/more-lively style than your daily. (Shoppers, by the way, would be especially attractive given the tendency of Hispanic adults to enjoy the "treasure hunt" of classified advertising and some retail ads.)

If the Hispanic market is big enough to support it, a separate publication—run separately—might be the best way to reach the Hispanic adults in your market area.

In any case, be sure to evaluate the options with a clear understanding of the unique characteristics of your own market, and with the realization that what was done before might not have been the most effective means of communication to a culture with such different expectations of journalism than our own.

Job Net

Referral service helps minorities find newspaper job opportunities

BY GREG LEWIS
Job Net Coordinator

The scarcity of nonwhites in professional newsroom jobs is a major concern of Job Net and the Institute for Journalism Education.

And despite verbal assurances of parity from newspaper editors, most newspapers have done very little.

Sixty percent of the 1,710 daily newspapers in America have yet to hire a minority journalist, despite the announced industry goal of 20 percent minority professionals in the newsroom by 2000. Much remains to be done.

Job Net can help.

Job Net, the national clearinghouse and referral service for minority journalists and newspaper editors seeking nonwhite talent, has been finding minority journalists for newspapers since 1979. Job Net is based in Berkeley, Calif., and is a program of the Institute for Journalism Education (IJE), also in Berkeley. IJE sponsors the Summer Program for Minority Journalists (at the University of California, Berkeley) and the Editing Program for Minority Journalists (at the University of Arizona, Tucson).

I am thoroughly convinced that those editors who want to desegregate their newsroom can and will.

Robert Bentley, managing editor of the *Bakersfield Californian*, is an example. In 1982 he inherited an all-white staff when he assumed his duties.

Since then, the *Bakersfield Californian* has added color to its staff. Of the four nonwhites on staff, two came through Job Net. Another minority staffer came from the Summer Program for Minority Journalists, and a fourth was discovered when Bentley attended a job opportunities conference for minorities.

Bentley's attitude and aggressive pursuit of nonwhites has given his newspaper a diversity that it did not have previously. He also serves as an example of how to get the job done.

Not everyone shares Bentley's desire for diversification.

"If they don't apply, how do they expect to get hired," snapped an editor of a 125,000 circulation daily in the West. "We don't pay a fee for anyone. We don't get minority applicants, so I guess they don't want to work here."

Job Net does charge a one-time fee at the point of hire. That fee goes back into the operation to keep the network going. As coordinator, I do not, nor does anyone on staff, receive a commission from a fee. The Job Net fee is based on the starting yearly salary of the hired journalist. It is a graduated scale, so that small newspapers can afford the service (the base fee is $300) as well as large newspapers. The highest fee is four percent of a starting salary of $30,000 or more.

Job Net has the resumes and clips of reporters, photographers and editors at all levels of experience on file at any given time. Those clips and resumes are dispatched to editors when they call or write with a job request. Editors are encouraged to proceed as they would normally with any hire.

Job Net finds candidates by recruiting at college campuses and at journalism conferences and advertising its services in trade and professional journals. We do not call journalists at random to solicit their resumes and clips, nor do we recruit for specific jobs. In other words, we do not raid newsrooms. If a journalist from your newsroom is registered in the Job Net system, it is because he/she has sent his/her resume and clips to us.

Since my salary is not based on how many placements I make, I can offer journalists who contact Job Net an honest and unbiased assessment of their clips and newsroom situation. Often, journalists are told they need to remain at their newspapers longer. I caution them about the stereotypes many editors are armed with, some of them contradictory:

- Minority journalists are job jumpers.
- Minority journalists aren't willing to take chances.
- Minority journalists lower the standards of newspapers.
- Minority journalists won't go to work in small towns.

There are too many young journalists of color searching for a place in the newsroom for editors of small newspapers to say they can't find minorities or that nonwhites don't want to go to small towns to begin their careers.

Job Net has placed nonwhite journalists at the *Danbury* (Conn.) *News-Times* (40,372 circulation); the *Boca Raton* (Fla.) *News* (13,541 circulation); the *Milledgeville* (Ga.) *Union-Recorder* (6,527 circulation); the *Danville* (Ill.) *Commerical-News* (28,618 circulation); the *Lexington* (N.C.) *Dispatch* (13,339 circulation); the *Jackson* (Tenn.) *Sun* (33,779 circulation), and the *Paris* (Texas) *News* (13,277 circulation).

The retention rate at those newspapers has been above average:

- A copy editor placed in Danbury in June 1981 is still there.
- A reporter placed in Boca Raton in March 1980 is still there.
- A sports reporter placed in Milledgeville in October 1981 was transferred to a larger newspaper in the chain in April 1983.
- A reporter and a photographer placed in Danville in March and April 1982 respectively are still there.
- A reporter placed in Lexington in October 1981 is still there.
- A sports reporter placed in Jackson in January 1981 left after more than one year.
- A photographer placed in Paris in August 1981 made the logical step to a 85,000 circulation newspaper this August.

Several of those journalists who went to those small-town newspapers to hone their skills were from urban centers such as Washington, D.C., Baltimore and New York, refuting an argument I've heard small town editors use. They also help to eliminate the stereotype that minority journalists tend to hop from job to job, selling their services to the highest bidder.

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Job Net's experience with journalists has not indicated they always opt for the higher salary.

The reason cited most often for declining a job among those Job Net candidates who have not accepted a Job Net replacement was their assignment. Thirty-nine Job Net candidates have refused jobs Job Net found for them. In only one case has the candidate given the low salary as a reason. And even in that case, the candidate—who had several years of experience—also objected to the paper's intention to assign him to a bureau.

Ninety-four candidates have accepted Job Net placements. Those 94 were placed at newspapers in most regions of the country and at all sizes. Not only have they been placed at the smaller newspapers cited earlier, but major metropolitan dailies including the *Los Angeles Times, Washington Post* and *Detroit Free Press*, and at national publications such as *USA TODAY* and *Sports Illustrated*.

Sometimes minority talent is right under the editor's nose.

Duayne Draffen was right there in New York, working for the Commodity News Service, when Job Net made the *New York Times* aware of him. Draffen currently is working on the national copy desk of the *New York Times*.

Job Net has forwarded resumes and clips to 184 daily newspapers and editors, which means only 10 percent of the daily newspaper editors in this country have attempted to use Job Net. Many of those 184 newspapers have minority journalists on their staffs.

But there are approximately 1,026 newspapers that have no minority professionals in their newsrooms. Job Net stands ready to help those newspapers who want to diversify their newsroom demographics and coverage.

Some of the 1,026 newspapers will be hard pressed to get minorities on their staffs, but if editors of those newspapers will make a commitment, it can be done.

Minority professionals are no different than their white counterparts when it comes to salary, quality of life and quality of the job. But because the American melting pot has not yet blended into a colorless society, there is concern on the part of people of color about where they live, work and play; and rightly so.

A Job Net candidate for a job at a 150,000 circulation daily in the Southeast was sent to a VDT in the sports department to work alone on an assignment she was given. Members of that sports department began to tell racist jokes.

After she returned to her native New York from the tryout, she told me that while the joke telling upset her, she was as offended when an editor did not remember her name and called her "Debra."

"Debra" was a black woman who worked for the newspaper. The Job Net candidate was not so sensitive that she could not understand a slip of the tongue but the editor did it several times and never corrected himself.

Needless to say, Job Net did not get a placement. The woman's words, though they were uttered two years ago, still haunt me from time to time: "How could you send me to a place like that?"